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SENATOR WALTER J. MAHONEY Times Staff Photo

Mahoney Brothers Political Enemies But They Get Along

Senator Walter J. Mahoney, New Leader of Upper House in Albany, Is Republican While His Brother, William B. Mahoney, Is Democratic Boss Man in Erie County—They Never Get in Each Other's Hair Because They Never Discuss Politics—Look Much Alike But They Are Not Twins.

By WILLIAM E. PEARSON
Assistant Managing Editor of The Times

Family acts are not uncommon in politics and government.

An outstanding example is the Dulleses—former Senator and Secretary of State John Foster, C.I.A. Director Allen W., and state department expert Eleanor Lansing. They are Republicans.

Another instance in another party—the Democratic—is afforded by the Lehmans. Herbert H. is the United States senator from New York and former governor. His brother, the late Irving Lehman, was chief judge of the court of appeals.

But there is one family act in politics that may be unique; at the very least it is extraordinary. This involves the Mahoneys of Buffalo—the bi-partisan family.

Senator Walter J., just elected party leader of the Albany upper house, is a Republican. Brother William B. is the Democratic boss man in Erie county and if his party ever comes to power in the state, he will have almost as much influence around Albany as Walter J. does now.

It might be thought that being political enemies, the Mahoney brothers do not get along. This is not the case at all. They never get into each other's hair because, as Walter J. explains it, "we never discuss politics."

Because of the Mahoneys, Buffalo—at the peak of a political campaign—can be vexingly confusing to the visiting reporter.

He goes to a Democratic pro-
wow and he finds a Mahoney—
William B.—running the show.
Then, making his way to a Re-
publican meeting, he finds a
Mahoney—Walter J.—in the chair.

It only compounds the re-
porter's difficulty that they re-

semble one another enough to be
twins. They aren't; it only looks
that way.

Walter J., chosen as senate
Republican leader Wednesday
and slated in January to be
elected as that house's president
pro tem (and ex officio as lieu-
tenant governor) is well known
in Northern New York.

With his attractive wife, Mary,
he spends a few days each sum-
mer at the Thousand Islands
club, Wellesley Island, and, addi-
tionally, he makes frequent visits
to the Northern counties on offi-
cial business.

As chairman of the senate
finance committee—a job he has
held since 1949 and will relin-
quish when he becomes president
pro tem—he has made it a prac-
tice to visit state institutions to
satisfy himself that the taxpay-
ers are getting their money's
worth.

Such inspections have taken
him to the St. Lawrence mental
hospital in Ogdensburg and to the
various teacher-training and other
state educational institutions in
Northern New York.

Once in awhile the senator
comes to Jefferson or St. Law-
rence county, neither for pleasure
nor for official reasons.

This would be to make a politi-
cal speech before some Republi-
can gathering. He is an effective
speaker and makes a phrase with
the best of them.

Addressing a Republican gath-
ering in Cape Vincent a little
over a year ago, the Buffalonian
referred to Governor Stevenson,
the Democratic presidential nom-
inee, as an "intellectual dilet-
tante" and as a "political adagio

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dancer whose direction is always to the left."

Mr. Mahoney is, of course, a senate veteran. He has been a member since 1937 and is ranked on the Republican side only by Senators Arthur H. Wicks, whom he replaces as leader; Thomas C. Desmond and Pliny W. Williamson.

But notwithstanding his long service in the upper house, he is only 45 years old and looks even younger. He is a teetotaler but he punishes a lot of cigars.

In the rough and tumble of floor debate, Walter Mahoney's is a different technique, but it influences. There is nothing of the down-shouter about this Irishman. He is soft-spoken and counts on facts and logic to win for him.

Behind the scenes—in the committee and conference rooms, where the real battles are fought—he is a skilled tactician.

This, even more than his seniority, was probably the factor that decided his colleagues to select him as leader.

It would not be accurate to describe Mr. Mahoney as enthusiastic for the St. Lawrence seaway. Coming from Buffalo he could not be and remain long in public office.

But he is and has been for the power project and he has had the courage to observe that, Buffalo opposition notwithstanding, the seaway may not be entirely without merit. (In Buffalo this isn't "courage," it's temerity.)

While Mr. Mahoney is all-Republican and has generally supported the program of Governor Dewey, he has had his brushes with the "second floor," as the legislature (third floor) often calls Mr. Dewey.

The most widely publicized of these clashes occurred in 1949, when Mr. Mahoney led a revolt on the governor's recommendation for new taxes. It is not often

around Albany that a Republican senator publicly opposes Mr. Dewey, but Mr. Mahoney did and carried his fight to the people with radio speeches.

Who won the fiscal argument? It is difficult to say. The governor was unable to obtain enactment of the new taxes, but Mr. Mahoney failed to reduce the recommended budget of expenditures.

Born in Buffalo on March 10, 1908, Senator Mahoney is a graduate of Lafayette High school and of Canisius college. He studied law at the University of Buffalo, receiving his degree in 1933.

He has been engaged in the practice of law in Buffalo since 1934, the year of his admission to the Bar.

Mr. Mahoney became active in politics as a member of the Young Republican club and served for a term as president of the statewide organization.

In 1936 he received his party's nomination to oppose Senator David E. Doyle, Democrat. Although that year marked the high tide of Democratic success throughout the nation, Mr. Mahoney unseated Mr. Doyle.

Taking office before he had reached his 29th birthday, Mr. Mahoney has subsequently been reelected as senator every two years.

Mr. and Mrs. Mahoney have four children and reside at 6 Saybrook Place in Buffalo. His law offices are in the Genesee building.

The senator is an authority in many fields of legislative endeavor. Insurance has been one of his specialties.

As though it were not unusual enough that Brother Bill is a Democratic leader, there is still a third Mahoney (no relation) who is a member of the state senate.

He is Francis J. Mahoney of New York who, improbable though it may seem, is the floor leader of the Democrats.